CITIES AS PALIMPSESTS?



Responses to Antiquity in Eastern Mediterranean Urbanism

Edited by
Elizabeth Key Fowden, Suna Çağaptay,
Edward Zychowicz-Coghill and Louise Blanke

IMPACT OF THE ANCIENT CITY, VOLUME 1

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Contents

Series preface vii
Acknowledgements ix
List of illustrations xi
List of contributors xvii

Introduction

1. Historical distance, physical presence and the living past of cities 3
   Elizabeth Key Fowden, Suna Çağaptay, Edward Zychowicz-Coghill and Louise Blanke

Accumulation and juxtaposition

2. Between wars and peace: Some archaeological and historiographical aspects to studying urban transformations in Jerusalem 29
   Gideon Avni

3. Visualising Constantinople as a palimpsest 47
   Robert Ousterhout

4. Transcultural encounters in medieval Anatolia: The Sungur Ağa Mosque in Niğde 61
   Suna Çağaptay

5. The water of life, the vanity of mortal existence and a penalty of 2,500 denarii: Thoughts on the reuse of classical and Byzantine remains in Seljuk cities 85
   Scott Redford

6. Echoes of late antique Esbus in Mamluk Ḥisbān (Jordan) 103
   Bethany J. Walker

Erasure and selective memory

7. Constantinople's medieval antiquarians of the future 125
   Benjamin Anderson

8. William of Tyre and the cities of the Levant 141
   Sam Ottewill-Soulsby

9. Portraits of Ottoman Athens from Martin Crusius to Strategos Makriyannis 155
Elizabeth Key Fowden

10. Perceptions, histories and urban realities of Thessaloniki's layered past 199
Nikolas Bakirtzis

The new and the old

11. From Byzantion to Constantinople 225
Paul Magdalino

12. Looking in two directions: Urban (re)building in sixth-century Asia Minor 247
Ine Jacobs

13. Byzantine urban imagination: Idealisation and political thinking (eighth to fifteenth centuries) 265
Helen Saradi

14. Ottoman urbanism and capital cities before the conquest of Constantinople (1453) 287
Dimitri J. Kastritsis

15. New history for old Istanbul: Late Ottoman encounters with Constantinople in the urban landscape 307
Göksun Akyürek

Whose past?

16. Medieval Arabic archaeologies of the ancient cities of Syria 329
Edward Zychowicz-Coghill

17. (Re)constructing Jarash: History, historiography and the making of the ancient city 351
Louise Blanke

18. Constantinople in the sixteenth-century Maghribī imaginary: The travelogue of ʿAlī al-Tamgrūtī 371
Amira K. Bennison

19. Beirut as a palimpsest: Conflicting present pasts, materiality and interpretation 387
Assaad Seif

Series preface

The present series of three volumes was made possible by a five-year Advanced Grant from the European Research Council under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 693418). By an ironic twist of fate, our 'Impact of the Ancient City' proposal was submitted to and accepted by the ERC at the very period when many in the UK seemed to have lost sight of the power of the ideals of free movement of goods, people and ideas. The University sector in general – and Cambridge in particular, the Classics Faculty of which hosted the project – felt that popular rhetoric had lost sight of solid advantages. The benefits reaped from the circulation of people and ideas go beyond the economic. The academic enterprise is and always has been a cosmopolitan one, and it is a relief that our government has agreed that this is one aspect of the old relationship with Europe worth preserving. Our gratitude to the European Union is therefore heartfelt.

In Europe and across the globe today there is tremendous interest in urbanism as a defining feature of our world, but often without sensitivity to the historical depth of cities. What we proposed was to think again about the relationship between cities with a Greco-Roman past and the long history of urbanism across the Mediterranean that has continued to the present. To do this, we felt it would not help to suggest a single story line. The story of 'Classical reception' increasingly concerns Classicists who, when challenged on the relevance of this past world to the present, point to a long and changing story of relevances. Strangely enough, there has been surprisingly little attention given to the 'reception' of ancient, Greco-Roman urbanism. To fill that gap, what we hoped to explore was how the city is not only a fundamental characteristic of Greco-Roman civilisation, but has acted as a vital mechanism by which that civilization was generated, transmitted and transmuted. Our project is about understanding changing responses to the urban past over the duration of two millennia, with a focus on the Mediterranean region.

The ERC Advanced Grant presented us with the exceptional opportunity to be ambitious in both scope and range while creating a small community of scholars with expertise from different periods and areas that reached beyond the capacities of any single scholar. From the outset the project was designed to range chronologically from late antiquity to the present, geographically across the Mediterranean, east and west, culturally across the Christian and Islamic worlds, and in disciplinary terms across the study of texts and physical remains. Despite the generous support, we soon discovered that it was impossible to do more than sample this vast area, selecting a group of scholars who both complemented and challenged each other: a late antique archaeologist specializing in Visigothic Spain (Javier Martínez Jiménez), an early medieval historian focusing on relations between the courts of Charlemagne

and Umayyad Spain (Sam Ottewill-Soulsby), an Arabist and historian of the medieval Middle East (Edward Zychowicz-Coghill), an archaeologist working on late antique and early Islamic Jordan and Egypt (Louise Blanke), an architectural historian exploring the transition from Byzantine to Ottoman (Suna Çağaptay), a late antique historian who has turned her attention to Ottoman Greece (Elizabeth Key Fowden), a PhD student with a background in Classics studying urban planning in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italy (Sofia Greaves) and a principal investigator specializing in Roman social history and urban archaeology in Italy (Andrew Wallace-Hadrill).

Other Cambridge colleagues joined our discussions on a regular basis, notably Tom Langley, writing a PhD on ideas of the city in Greek Patristic writers, Professor Amira Bennison, a historian of the medieval Maghrib, especially its cities, Professor Rosamond McKitterick, a leading figure in the study of Carolingian France and papal Rome, and Professor Martin Millett, a Roman archaeologist with a longstanding interest in urbanism. We benefited from the support and advice of the members of our Advisory Committee, both in Cambridge (in addition to the above named, Cyprian Broodbank, Robin Cormack, Garth Fowden, Alessandro Launaro, Robin Osborne and John Patterson) and beyond – Luuk de Ligt (Leiden), Çiğdem Kafescioğlu (Istanbul), Ray Laurence (Sydney), Keith Lilley (Belfast) and from Oxford, Josephine Quinn, Bryan Ward-Perkins and Chris Wickham. We also enjoyed the invaluable support of two administrators, Nigel Thompson of the Classics Faculty and Beth Clark, whose calm efficiency facilitated conferences and seminars, enabled foreign travel and smoothed contact with the bureaucracies at both ends.

We invited many scholars, from Cambridge or further afield, to share their knowledge with us at our weekly seminars. We also organised one-day workshops, including one on the Roman and Islamic city in North Africa and one on Cities and Citizenship after antiquity (that led to an *Al-Masāq* special issue)[1], as well a panel for the 2018 Leeds International Medieval congress on 'Memory' and two three-day conferences, one in Istanbul and one in Rome. The last three underlie the three volumes in the present series. In each of those conferences, the members of our group contributed, but we knew that to cover the ground we needed to bring in international colleagues. The three volumes that constitute the present series are far from exhausting the output of the project, and each of us has papers and monographs in the pipeline or already out. Each of the three volumes has its own set of questions, but together they build up an overriding collective agenda of exploring how the cities of the Greek and Roman past, and such ideas of the city that were articulated around them, have impacted on the city and the idea of the city in later periods.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill
29 July 2021

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[1] Javier Martínez Jiménez and Sam Ottewill-Soulsby, *Cities and Citizenship after Rome*, *Al-Masāq. Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* vol. 32 no. 1 (2020).

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The origins of this volume can be traced back to a three-day conference in May 2018, generously hosted by Bahçeşehir University (BAU). Thanks to Enver Yücel, founder and chairman of BAU, the conference took place at the main campus of BAU overlooking the Bosphorus with views of the old city and the new. We are grateful to Necdet Kenar, secretary general of BAU and the students from the Faculty of Architecture and Design at BAU who worked in conference management; Berna Argun Habib for her planning and Hidayet Softaoğlu for help in designing the poster and booklet for the event.

Several scholars presented papers at the conference, but were not able to submit their papers for this collaborative volume, as they were either part of ongoing projects or promised for publication elsewhere: for their participation we thank Sotirios Dimitriadis, Asa Eger, Ahmet Ersoy, Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, Emily Neumeier, Alessandra Ricci and Alan Walmsley. Hugh Kennedy is to be thanked for drawing out themes and problems that emerged in the first day, Arietta Papaconstantinou for performing the same increasingly challenging task at the end of the second day and finally Cemal Kafadar for his concluding remarks that reflected on what we had learned over the three-day event, and what more we might want to explore. Our gratitude to Bob Ousterhout for a learned tour of the Chora Monastery and to Suna Çağaptay, not only for overseeing the conference organisation with Beth Clark, but also for devising and leading our project site trips in Istanbul and in western Anatolia which included Nicomedia/İzmit, Nicaea/İznik, Prusa/Bursa, Ephesus/Efes and Magnesia/Manisa. The fact that no one collapsed from mental or physical exhaustion is a tribute to Suna's humour, inventiveness and knowledge.

Illustrations

1.1. Map. Standard English names of cities discussed in *Cities as Palimpsests?* (Beth Clark, made with Natural Earth. Free vector and raster map data available at www.naturalearthdata.com). 16
2.1. Aerial view of the Old City from the south (G. Avni and the Israel Antiquities Authority). 34
2.2. The street under Robinson Arch (G. Avni and the Israel Antiquities Authority). 35
2.3. The Madaba Map (The Israel Antiquities Authority). 39
3.1. Istanbul. Hagia Sophia, seen from the west (author). 48
3.2. Istanbul. Fethiye Camii (Theotokos Pammakaristos), hypothetical plan, showing multiple phases (author). 48
3.3. Istanbul. Excavation for subway, near Aksaray, revealing multiple strata of architecture (author). 49
3.4. Istanbul. Çemberlitaş (Constantine's Column), general view (author). 50
3.5. Istanbul. Palaces excavated by the Hippodrome, plan (author, after W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls*, fig. 109). 51
3.6. Constantinople, plan of city showing Basil I's ceremonial route (author, after C. Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople*, plan II). 53
3.7. Istanbul. Fenari İsa Camii (Theotokos tou Libos), view from the east (author). 54
3.8. Istanbul. Plan of Fenari İsa Camii (Theotokos tou Libos) (author, after V. Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople: Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries*, plan XXIII-4). 55
3.9. Istanbul. Kariye Camii, view from east, showing multiple phases of construction (author). 56
3.10. Istanbul. Plan of Kariye Camii, showing organisation by unrelated axes (author). 57
4.1. Return of the Magi, MS. W539, fol. 19 recto, (Walter's Art Museum, Baltimore). 61
4.2. Sungur Ağa Mosque, general view from the east (author). 63
4.3. Sungur Ağa Mosque, restitution of the ground plan (author, redrawn based on A. Gabriel, *Niğde Türk Anıtları*, fig. 14). 66
4.4. Sungur Ağa Mosque, arched iwan, east portal (author). 68
4.5. Sungur Ağa Mosque, window detail, north portal (author). 70
4.6. Sungur Ağa Mosque, fenestration details (author). 70
4.7. Sungur Ağa Mosque, fenestration details (author). 71

4.8. The ‘merged angled chevron’ arch, St. Epiphanios (Thomas Kaffenberger). 71
4.9. The ‘merged angled chevron’ arch, St. George Exorinos (Thomas Kaffenberger). 71
4.10. Dedication and ritual pages from MS 2027, (1270s) fols. 61v, 86v. Armenian Patriarchate, Library of the Monastery of St. James. 72
4.11. Sungur Ağa Mosque, mouldings, side walls, east portal (author). 74
4.12. Floral and faunal moulding details, canon tables (1260) MS 251, fols. 2r and 3v, Armenian Patriarchate Library of the Monastery of St. James. 75
4.13. Tomb of Khudavand Khatun, Niğde (author). 77
4.14. Sungur Ağa Mosque, North portal, door lintel, bicephalic gyrfalcon (author). 77
4.15. Tomb of Khudavand Khatun, Niğde, the crowned female head (author). 78
5.1. Konya Citadel (used with permission from Gertrude Bell Archive, Newcastle University). 88
5.2. The Sahib Ata Mosque, Konya, portal (used with permission from Gertrude Bell Archive, Newcastle University). 89
5.3. Fortification walls of Konya, detail (used with permission from Gertrude Bell Archive, Newcastle University). 93
5.4. The Sahib Ata Mosque, Konya, portal detail showing sarcophagus (used with permission from Gertrude Bell Archive, Newcastle University). 98
5.5. The Sahib Ata Mosque, Konya, portal detail showing right hand sarcophagus (Benni Claasz Coockson, 2003). 99
6.1. Aerial view of Tall Ḥisbān (courtesy of APAAME_20090930_MJN-50 © Michael John Neville, Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology in the Middle East). 105
6.2. View of entrance to Ḥisbān Citadel from the south. The layers of plastered roads are visible in section to the left of the monumental staircase used in the Roman and Byzantine periods (author). 109
6.3. Inscribed panel as spolia in doorway of Ottoman building, ‘Nabulsi qaṣr’ (courtesy of Dr. Daniel Redlinger). 112
6.4. Site plan of Tall Ḥisbān (courtesy of Dr. Nicolò Pini). 114
6.5. Mamluk-era vaulted structure with doorway in Field M, view upslope. Note Early Islamic, Byzantine and Roman walls below (project files). 115
7.1. Remains of one gate of the Forum of Theodosius, Beyazıt, Istanbul, as exposed in 1969. Deutsches Archäologisches Insitut Negative No. D-DAI-IST-69-3 (W. Schiele). 129
7.2. Portrait of a Theodosian emperor, discovered in Beyazıt, now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum (Inv. 5028 T) (B. Anderson). 129

7.3. Joshua (at far left) commands sun and moon to stand still; the Israelites rout the Amorites (at centre); the kings of the Amorites flee, as Joshua hears from two soldiers (at right). Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. gr. 431, fol. 13r (© Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana). 130

7.4. Members of the imperial guard of Theodosius on the northwest side of the obelisk base in the Hippodrome, Istanbul (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Negative No. D-DAI-Z-NEG-9399. Photographer unknown). 131

7.5. Segment of the ‘Great Trajanic Frieze’ reinstalled in the passage of the Arch of Constantine, Rome (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Negative No. D-DAI-ROM-37.328). 132

7.6. Surrender of the Guard of Maximus, relief fragment from the Column of Theodosius now built into the foundations of Beyazıt Hamam, Istanbul (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Negative No. D-DAI-IST-R6408. U. Peschlow). 132

7.7. Scenes of naval combat on the east side of the Column of Arcadius. ‘The Freshfield Album’, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.17.2, fol. 11 (detail) (Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge). 138

7.8. Two shipboard soldiers, relief fragment from the Column of Theodosius now built into the foundations of Beyazıt Hammam, Istanbul (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Negative No. D-DAI-IST-2565. Photographer unknown). 138

9.1. Martin Crusius, sketch map of Athens, unpublished diary (Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, UBT Mh 466, vol. 3, fol. 302). 160

9.2. Franz Hogenberg, Jerusalem, in Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, vol. 2, pl. 54 (Cologne 1575) (Princeton University Library). 163

9.3. Anonymous, The Marquis de Nointel at Jerusalem in 1674 (J.-L. Losi for B. Janson. © Oscar de la Renta). 167

9.4. Anonymous, The Marquis de Nointel at Athens in 1674 (Chartres, Musée des Beaux-Arts, on permanent loan to the Museum of the City of Athens-Vouros-Eutaxias Foundation). 170

9.5. ‘Vue d’Athènes dont une partie est cachée derniere la colline’, drawing provided by Jean Vaillant and published in Jacob Spon, *Relation de l’état présent de la ville d’Athènes, ancienne capitale de la Grèce, bâtie depuis 3400 ans avec un abrégé de son histoire et de ses antiquités* (Lyon 1674) (American School of Classical Studies, Gennadius Library). 173

9.6. Engraving of the first known plan of Athens, published by Georges Guillet, *Athènes ancienne et nouvelle, et l’estat present de l’empire des Turcs, contenant la vie du Sultan Mahomet IV., le ministère de Coprogli Achmet Pacha, Grand Vizir, & son campement devant Candie. Avec le plan de la ville d’Athènes, par le Sr. de la Guilletière* (Paris 1675) (American School of Classical Studies, Gennadius Library). 176

9.7. Gravier d'Ortières mission, 'Plan d'Athenae', pencil drawing, *c.* 1685. 162v, in *Estat des places que les princes mahométans possèdent sur les côtes de la Mer Méditerrannée et dont les plans ont esté levez par ordre du Roy à la faveur de la visitte des Eschelles de Levant, que Sa Majesté a fait faire les années 1685, 1686 et 1687, avec les projets pour y faire descente et s'en rendre maistres* (Bibliothèque nationale de France). 177

9.8. Anonymous, 'Plan d'Athenae', coloured engraving, *c.* 1670 (Benaki Museum, Athens). 177

9.9. Jacob Spon, plan of Athens, in *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce et du Levant, fait aux années 1675 et 1676* (Lyon 1678) (American School of Classical Studies, Gennadius Library). 182

9.10. Giovanni Giacomo de Rossi, *Teatro della Guerra contro il Turco* (Rome 1687) (Efstathios Finopoulos Collection, Benaki Museum). 184

9.11. Ioannes Makriyannis and Dimitrios Zographos, 10 'Μάχη πρώτη των Αθηνών' (The first battle of Athens) (American School of Classical Studies, Gennadius Library). 188

9.12. Ioannes Makriyannis and Dimitrios Zographos, 17 'Μάχη εις Ανάλατον' (The battle at Analaton) (American School of Classical Studies, Gennadius Library). 189

9.13. Ioannes Makriyannis and Dimitrios Zographos, 19 'Η πολιορκία Αθηνών' (The siege of Athens, 3 August 1826–25 May 1827 (O. S.)) (American School of Classical Studies, Gennadius Library). 189

10.1. View from the western walls of Thessaloniki (N. Bakirtzis). 201

10.2. Postcard showing the promenade of Thessaloniki in the early years of the twentieth century with the White Tower in the background (N. Bakirtzis). 204

10.3. Postcard showing Thessaloniki from the east in the beginning of the twentieth century (N. Bakirtzis). 209

10.4. Views of the churches of Saint Panteleimon and Hagia Sophia along an axial thoroughfare following the design of the New Plan for Thessaloniki (N. Bakirtzis). 211

10.5. Excavations during the installation of Thessaloniki's new water pipe (N. Bakirtzis). 215

11.1. Byzantion excluding the Hippodrome (adapted from W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon von Byzantion-Konstantinopel-Istanbul*, 497). Blue: pre-Constantinian structures, locations approximate except for the Basilica, the Baths of Zeuxippos and the Temple of Fortuna Redux (column of the Goths). Red: constructed or planned by Constantine. Yellow: schematic lines of streets corresponding to the boundaries of the urban *regiones* in the fourth-century *Notitia.* Green: hypothetical line of other streets. 228

11.2. *Folles* of Constantine I, with the image of the camp (or city?) gate on the reverse. 234

11.3. Constantinople in the fourth century (adapted from C. Mango, 'The shoreline of Constantinople in the fourth century', p. 21), showing the main Constantinian monuments: Golden Gate (*Porta Aurea*), Constantine's Mausoleum and the Church of the Holy Apostles (HA), the Capitol (C), Tetrapylon (T, possibly not Constantinian), Forum (F). The monumental centre, comprising: Basilica (B), Hagia Eirene (E), Milion (M), Hagia Sophia (S), Hippodrome (H), Baths of Zeuxippos (Z), Augusteum (A), Senate House (S), Great Palace (P). 238

11.4. The regions of fifth-century Constantinople, illustrating the street layout of the Constantinian 'new town' between the Capitol and the Forum, as reflected in the boundaries between regions VI–X. 240

12.1. Late antique ionic capital from the Tetrapylon Street (© Aphrodisias Excavations). 252

12.2. Sixth-century street drain constructed with mortared rubble and statuary fragments (© Aphrodisias Excavations). 253

12.3. Abandoned stack of column drums discovered in the Odeion at Sagalassos (© Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project). 254

12.4. Roman street built over in the late fifth, early sixth century at Assos (© Assos excavations archive). 256

15.1. Present day Çemberlitaş (author). 308

15.2. 'The Tomb of Sultan Mahmoud; the Burnt Column in the Distance', in J. Robertson, *Photographic Views of Constantinople* (London, 1853) (Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program). 312

15.3. 'The tomb of Sultan Mahmoud constructed in 1840', G. Berggren, No. 16, 1875 (Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program). 313

15.4. 'Entrance of Sultan Abdul-Aziz to Mausoleum of Mahmoud II', *Le Journal illustré*, vol. III, 28 (9 Juillet 1876) (Courtesy of SALT Research). 314

15.5. 'Panoramic view of the Seraglio Point from one of the minarets of Hagia Sophia' in G. Fossati, lithographed by L. Haghe, *Aya Sofia Constantinople, as recently restored by order of H.M. the Sultan Abdul Medjid* (London, 1852) plate 20 (Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.). 318

16.1. Cities in Anatolia and Syria which Yāqūt claims were founded in ancient times by the Romans. Map after M. Whittow, *Making of Orthodox Byzantium*. (Design: Beth Clark, made with Natural Earth. Free vector and raster map data @naturalearthdata.com). 340

17.1. Map of Jarash showing the city's major monuments (© Thomas Lepaon). 354

17.2. Column from Jarash in Flushing Meadows, Queens, New York (Kyle Brunner). 357

17.3. View towards the north of the re-erected colonnade on Jarash main north-south thoroughfare (author). 358

17.4. Umayyad/Abbasid period mosque in the intersection of Jarash's two main streets (© Alan Walmsley/Islamic Jarash Project). 360
17.5. The Oval piazza, one of Jarash's most iconic monuments, which also appeared on stamps and banknotes issued in 1965 (author). 361
17.6. Plan of early Islamic central Jarash *c*. 750–850 (© Rune Rattenborg). 365
19.1. Zawiyat Ibn 'Arraq al Dimashqi as restored and integrated within the Beirut Souks (Assaad Seif). 392
19.2. Al-Amin Mosque (Assaad Seif). 395
19.3a. The Hariri Memorial Grave near Muhammad al-Amin Mosque (I.S. Douaihi. Reprinted with permission from the photographer). 397
19.3b. The Hariri Memorial, and its position in Martyrs' Square with the Martyrs' Statue in the centre (Dia Mrad, cropped with permission from the photographer). 397
19.4. The St. George Maronite Cathedral in the 1890s (unknown photographer). 398
19.5. The new campanile built to the south-west corner of the St. George Maronite Cathedral (Assaad Seif). 399
19.6. St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral main western entrance (James Gallagher, CC BY 2.0). 399
19.7. The claimed Anastasis mosaic inside the Crypt Museum (SOLIDERE, CC BY 2.0). 401
19.8. The ivy vine heart-shaped leaves decorations of the tepidarium of the bath house (Assaad Seif). 401
19.9. The dedication column to the left side of the entrance of the Greek Orthodox St. George Cathedral (Assaad Seif). 406
19.10. Close view of the dedication column showing the Latin inscription (Assaad Seif). 406

Contributors

Co-editors

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Contributors

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Chapter 14

Ottoman urbanism and capital cities before the conquest of Constantinople (1453)

Dimitri J. Kastritsis

By the time the Ottomans captured Byzantine Constantinople and made it the capital of their own empire, they already had a long history of urbanism spanning over a century. Operating from the beginning of their existence in a region that had always been at the very centre of the eastern Roman world, their early conquests included many towns with a continuous history stretching back to antiquity. In 1331 they captured Nicaea, site of two ecumenical councils and former capital of the most successful Byzantine successor state following the Latin sack of Constantinople in 1204. The Byzantine court of Nicaea had moved back to Constantinople in 1261, only forty years before the Ottomans first made their appearance in the region. So when Nicaea became Ottoman, its role as a Byzantine capital-in-exile was still within living memory. If Nicaea was ever considered as an Ottoman capital, this did not last; five years earlier, they had taken another important Byzantine town, Bursa (Proussa), which was to fulfill this role into the fifteenth century. Shortly after they crossed the straits to Europe around 1350, as allies of the Byzantine claimant John VI Kantakouzenos, they went on to capture other historic towns, including Gallipoli (Kallipolis, Gelibolu), Dimetoka (Didymoteichon) and Edirne (Adrianople), all with a Roman and Byzantine past.[1] In the first half of the fifteenth century, Edirne would gradually replace Bursa as Ottoman capital, while Gallipoli would continue to function as the main Ottoman port, and Dimetoka as a fortified stronghold.[2]

[1] Gallipoli was conquered in 1354 and Dimetoka by 1361. The date of the Ottoman conquest of Edirne is still disputed, see Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'La conquête d'Adrianople par les Turcs'; İnalcık, 'The conquest of Edirne'; Zachariadou, 'The conquest of Adrianople by the Turks'.

[2] It is still not uncommon to find the view that immediately after its conquest by the Ottomans (whenever this actually occurred) Edirne replaced Bursa as Ottoman capital: *e.g.* Blessing, 'Seljuk past and Timurid present', 227. In the fourteenth century, Edirne was certainly the main military base for Ottoman expansion into the Balkans, and capital of Ottoman Rumelia; but as I will show below, Bursa

These are but a few examples of cities with a long Roman past taken by the Ottomans in the first century of their history. They all have in common their central location around Constantinople, the undisputed centre of the eastern Roman world. By this time, Constantinople was an expanse of partly occupied or abandoned buildings, ancient monuments and open fields, all contained within the massive Theodosian walls that still define the old town of Istanbul today. When it was finally captured by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II 'the Conqueror' (*fatih*) in 1453, the city was in desperate need of resettlement and reconstruction. Mehmed began this work shortly after the conquest, and by his death in 1481 had already transformed Constantinople into a suitable capital for his empire. From the perspective of early modern and later Ottoman history, fields practically synonymous with the academic study of the Ottoman Empire today, it is tempting to view the empire as only really beginning in 1453. According to this view, what is past is prologue to the great Ottoman Empire of Mehmed the Conqueror, Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) and their successors. It is certainly true that by the second half of the sixteenth century, people living both within and outside the empire's borders had come to think of it as it had become during the reign of Süleyman. By then, its borders stretched from the Caucasus to Algiers and from Hungary to Yemen. At least in name, all of this was ruled from Istanbul, which the Ottomans still formally called Constantinople (*Ḳosṭanṭıniyye*).

Under Mehmed and his successors, the old Byzantine capital was repopulated and rebuilt with new palaces and foundations. These included Mehmed's own 'new' mosque complex (Fātih), which would serve as a model for such foundations in the future, and the Topkapı Palace, which would continue to develop and function as the centre of Ottoman government for centuries to come.[3] By the mid-sixteenth century, the city was flourishing once more with a population comparable to that of the Justinianic era,[4] and the great architect Sinan had developed the classical Ottoman style whose culmination was the mosque complex of Süleyman I.[5] This style would radiate outwards from Istanbul to the provinces as a projection of Ottoman culture and authority, where it is still rightly associated with the Ottoman legacy. However great the significance of Mehmed's actions following 1453, it is true in more ways than one that he and his successors were not beginning from nothing when they rebuilt Constantinople as the new Ottoman capital. First of all, despite the poor state of its infrastructure, in 1453 the city still boasted many famous buildings dating from both

was still thought of as the main Ottoman capital ('abode of sovereignty', *dār al-mülk*), a situation that lasted well into the fifteenth century.

3 On the Topkapı Palace, see Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*; Kafescioğlu, *Costantinopolis/Istanbul*, 56–66. On Mehmed's 'new' mosque complex (Fatih) and its relationship to the Holy Apostles, see Kafescioğlu, *Costantinopolis/Istanbul*, 54, 66–92; Dark and Özgümüş, *Constantinople*, 83–96. The last work is based on archaeological research and points to continuities between the two structures, including reuse of a Byzantine limestone wall.

4 For Constantinople under Justinian, a common population estimate is ca 350,000. Another common estimate for the Ottoman city, 700,000 in the sixteenth century, is probably exaggerated at least for the city *intra muros*. See İnalcık, 'Istanbul', 244.

5 See Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 189–256.

ancient and medieval times. These included the cathedral of Hagia Sophia, which was converted to a mosque and had a great influence on Ottoman architecture in the fifteenth century and beyond, and the crumbling church of the Holy Apostles, which Mehmed would raze to build his own 'new' mosque complex in the years 1463–1470. At the same time, the Ottoman sultan and his court brought to Constantinople their existing architectural and urban culture, as it had been developing elsewhere for over a century. This in turn had been created in dialogue with the existing material heritage they found in these towns; the architectural traditions of medieval Anatolia, Byzantium and the wider Islamic world; and last but not least, an awareness of the past and their own history as it was evolving.[6]

After Mehmed the Conqueror's decision to rebuild Constantinople and make it the capital of his empire, the former Byzantine metropolis would come to play a central role in Ottoman history surpassing that of the previous capitals. In many respects, this was similar to the role the city had played for Byzantium, which had been deemed in its own turn a direct continuation of Rome. While this much is clear, what is significantly less so is the extent to which the city continued trends already present in previous Ottoman capitals. Thanks to palaces, state-funded religious complexes, and other important social buildings, Bursa, Edirne and other key cities (*e.g.* Amasya, Manisa, Gallipoli) played a major role in the political struggles of the first half of the fifteenth century. With or without the consent of their inhabitants, these towns served as seats of Ottoman courts and administrative structures, and not infrequently switched hands between different contenders for the throne, as well as becoming targets for hostile neighbouring states. Given this turbulent history, it is fair to say that architecture dating from this time serves the modern historian both as a source of 'hard' data, such as inscriptions providing information on who ruled a particular city at a given time, as well as more complex political and cultural messages. Buildings were imbued with multiple layers of meaning, which could derive equally from their religious and social functions, architectural style and association with one or more founders. But such messages and their reception can be difficult to interpret in the absence of a wider source base. For example, it is still unclear to what extent the strikingly Byzantine brickwork of Murad I's complex in Bursa, or the Timurid tiles of Mehmed I's 'green' (Yeşil) complex in the same city, represented or were perceived as deliberate attempts to communicate political or cultural messages, or should simply be attributed to the availability of artisans skilled in particular architectural styles.[7]

[6] For a wide-ranging discussion of the engagement of Ottoman architecture with the past, see Ousterhout, 'The east, the west, and the appropriation of the past'. On the development of Ottoman architecture before 1453, see Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 71–103; Yürekli, 'Architectural patronage and the rise of the Ottomans'; Necipoğlu, 'Anatolia and the Ottoman legacy'.

[7] On this complex and its tiles, see Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mi'marisinde Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri*, 46–118; Necipoğlu, 'From international Timurid to Ottoman'; Blessing, 'Seljuk past and Timurid present'. Veronika Poier (Harvard University) is currently completing a PhD thesis on the Yeşil complex. I would like to thank her for sharing some of her preliminary findings with me. For a broader perspective, see also Blessing, 'The blue-and-white tiles of the Muradiye in Edirne'.

To understand the history of Ottoman urbanism and architectural patronage before Constantinople, it is especially important to consider the role of the previous capitals of Bursa and Edirne, which continued to be important sites of imperial patronage even after 1453. The development of these towns must be considered not only in the context of the region's architectural history, but also more broadly of the early Ottoman state and the society it represented. The present contribution aims to shed light on the role of these former capitals and some of their main structures in early Ottoman history, by placing the research of architectural historians in a broader historical context. More specifically, I will focus on the first two Ottoman capitals, Bursa and Edirne, their place in Ottoman history, and their relationship to one another in the tumultuous half century prior to 1453. This will provide insight into how these former capitals were presented in some of the narrative accounts of the time, as well as the political and cultural significance of some of their most important royal foundations.

Bursa and its multiple pasts

A city is more than its buildings, and a larger question to be answered as part of any investigation of early Ottoman urbanism, its antecedents and its aspirations is what did it mean for a city to be the main Ottoman capital during the period in question. As early as the 1330s, the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta who travelled through Anatolia referred to the second Ottoman ruler Orhan as 'the Sultan of Bursa', while at the same time suggesting that no small part of Orhan's success came from the fact that he maintained a network of castles which he visited regularly.[8] From this early remark, it is already clear that there was a main Ottoman capital associated with the ruler, but that it was also normal for the him to be frequently absent. This largely itinerant nature of the Ottoman ruler and his court, as well as the fact that there was nonetheless a main administrative centre which was initially Bursa, is confirmed by the testimony of Gregory Palamas, a Byzantine archbishop and intellectual who was captured in 1354 after the Ottomans took Gallipoli. Palamas spent most of his captivity in Nicaea, following an audience with Orhan and members of his court in a location somewhere in the mountains around Bursa.[9] Returning to Ibn Battuta, it is clear from his description that a large part of Bursa's importance came from the fact

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8 Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 449–452.

9 For Palamas' own written account of the meeting, see Philippidis-Braat, 'La captivité', 146–151. The most famous aspect of the encounter is a debate arranged by Orhan and recorded by his Byzantine physician, in which Palamas discussed matters of theology with a group of wise men called the *Chionai* (text in Philippidis-Braat, 'La captivité', 168–185). The identity of these people has been the subject of scholarly controversy for some time; most recently, Ruth Miller has proposed a new theory that they may have come from Ilkhanid Iran (Miller, 'Religious v. ethnic identity', 40–41). While this has gained some acceptance in Ottoman circles, it is based on a weak understanding of the texts and Byzantine literary context. A detailed discussion of the evidence is beyond the scope of the present contribution, but will form the subject of a future study.

that it had large and well-provisioned markets, mentioned by the traveller alongside its famous hot springs.[10] By this time, the town had probably already emerged as a western terminus of the overland trade routes from Iran and the east (the so-called Silk Road).[11] Of course, it is also important to bear in mind that Ibn Battuta's account was only written down later in the fourteenth century, by which time the fame of the Ottomans and their capital city had increased, possibly colouring the traveller's earlier impressions. In the meantime, the dynasty had continued to invest in Bursa's markets and other buildings.

Particularly worthy of mention in Bursa are the Ottoman royal complexes (*ʿimāret/külliye*),[12] which in addition to their founder's purpose-built tomb (*türbe*) included a central multifunctional building and other structures serving social, religious and educational purposes (madrasas, hospitals, baths etc.). These complexes would take much grander form in Constantinople, beginning with the already mentioned mosque complex of Mehmed II the Conqueror (*fātiḥ*). Unlike Mehmed's foundation, however, the earlier complexes did not yet include Friday mosques (*cāmiʿ*), which were still treated at the time as a different, parallel type of construction. Before 1453, the central buildings of Ottoman royal complexes (*ʿimāret*) were clearly multifunctional, and similar in purpose to dervish convents (*zāviye, ḫānḳāh*) used for prayer, lodging, Sufi ceremonies and other social functions.[13] In other words, the Ottomans were following precedents established by previous Muslim rulers of Anatolia, notably the Seljuks and Mongol-Ilkhanids. Over the course of the thirteenth century AD, despite the political turmoil of the period, members of the ruling classes of Muslim Anatolia had constructed many inns (*ḫan, kervānserāy*), madrasas, hospitals, hospices and dervish convents, which can still be seen today in Konya, Sivas, Erzurum, Amasya, Kayseri and other towns. These construction practices were continued by the emirates (*beyliks*) of western Anatolia into the fourteenth century, including the Ottomans, who expanded them to the region around Constantinople and into the Balkans.

The early Ottoman response to the pre-existing urban fabric of Bursa reveals examples of straightforward re-use and others of re-deployment of Byzantine architecture for new purposes. One of the first such re-deployments was the use of a Byzantine monastic complex in the city's citadel for the burial of, first, the founder of the dynasty, Osman, and later his son Orhan, who probably conquered the city in 1326 right after his father's death.[14] The first Ottoman palace was also located in the

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[10] Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, 450.

[11] For Ottoman Bursa's importance as a trading centre from the middle of the fourteenth century, see İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History*, 218–224.

[12] The term *külliye* is a neologism dating to the nineteenth century; in early Ottoman sources, the entire complex is generally called *ʿimāret* ('foundation'), a term often translated today as 'hospice' or 'soup kitchen'. See the discussion in Dark and Özgümüş, *Constantinople*, 87. In the passage already cited, Ibn Battuta mentions a hospice in Bursa, presumably that of Orhan (see below).

[13] Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 49–50.

[14] Çağaptay, 'Prousa/Bursa', 52–62; Çağaptay, *First Capital*, 34–42, 60–61. It is also likely that Orhan's Friday mosque, famous for its 1337 inscription which has been the subject of much scholarly controversy,

citadel, although it no longer survives. It was probably located near the royal tombs, standing above the developing town, much as Mehmed II's first palace in Istanbul would later dominate the densely populated district of Tahtakale.[15] As in the case of Mehmed II's later Fatih complex on the site of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, this was sacred space already, albeit for a different religion. Under Orhan, this space would be extended down the slopes to the citadel's north-east, where Orhan constructed a socio-religious complex. Since Byzantine Bursa at the time of the Ottoman conquest was mostly confined to the area within the city walls, Orhan's complex would have benefitted from proximity to the royal tombs, while at the same time playing an important role in promoting the growth of the town outside the citadel walls. Its landscaping, perched on a hilltop incorporating the sloping terrain, has been seen as setting a precedent for later Ottoman royal complexes.[16]

Not unlike classical and late antique cities, the pious foundations of Orhan's son Murad I (r. 1363–1389) and grandson Bayezid I (r. 1389–1402) situated on hilltops offering panoramic views of the city and surrounding plains, served as the nucleus for royally sponsored urban development. Just as Orhan's complex just outside the acropolis and the royal tombs located within it came to function as the heart of the lower city, these complexes, which included purpose-built mausolea (*türbe*), came to function as the nuclei of new urban districts. The complex of Murad I developed on another hilltop, in the Kaplıca district, with its hot springs mentioned by Ibn Battuta and famous already from Byzantine times. However, his Friday mosque (known as Şehadet, 'martyrdom') is in the citadel in the older part of town. This suggests that he wished to make his mark on the central part of the city, while also being associated with the development of a new, more peripheral neighbourhood. The same is true for the architectural patronage of Bayezid I, who provided the city with its greatest Friday mosque (the famous Ulu Cami) in the old town and commercial centre, but also commissioned a *külliye* including his own tomb on a hilltop in a completely different, as yet undeveloped part of town.[17] Apart from the buildings still visible today, namely the tomb, main multifunctional building on a 'T-type' plan, madrasa and bathouse, the complex originally also included a hospital, garden palace and fountain supplied by an aqueduct. Like Orhan's complex, Bayezid's thus seems originally to have functioned as a royally sponsored nucleus for religious, social and political life in a new part of the city.

In order to gain insight into the central role of Bursa in the early fifteenth century, it is worth taking a look at the Ottoman civil war or interregnum of 1402–1413, a

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was a converted building located in the vicinity of these tombs. I would like to thank Suna Çağaptay for this observation, which is based on the testimony of Ibn Battuta, Evliya Çelebi, John Covel and other primary authors.

15 On Mehmed II's first palace in Istanbul and the neighbourhood of Tahtakale (*taḥt al-ḳalʿa*, 'under the castle') see Kafescioglu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 22–24, 28–35.

16 On Orhan's complex and palace in the context of the history of Ottoman architecture and Bursa's development, see Pancaroğlu, 'Architecture, landscape, and patronage', 42–43.

17 On the complex of Bayezid I see Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 49–51.

period of instability following Timur's defeat of Bayezid at the Battle of Ankara in 1402, which put an end to the first Ottoman attempt at empire. In the ensuing dynastic wars and relations with foreign powers, Bursa played a pivotal role, leaving no doubt as to the fact that it was still perceived as the Ottoman capital.[18] One valuable source on the importance of the city to the Ottoman princes competing for the throne is the tomb of the defeated sultan Bayezid I, their father over whose legacy they competed. An examination of its history serves to demonstrate the extent to which royal authority at the time revolved around Bursa as a whole, and in particular Bayezid's socio-religious complex, where the late ruler had intended to be buried. In addition to the mausoleum and its inscription, evidence for this competition is provided by a contemporary epic account of the dynastic wars from the perspective of the winner, Mehmed I (r. 1413–1421).[19] According to this account, in the immediate aftermath of Timur's departure from Anatolia in early 1403, when he left behind the corpse of Bayezid who had died in captivity, all four of the deceased Ottoman ruler's sons still capable of making a bid for the succession became involved in a struggle to take control of Bursa. In so doing, they clearly intended to show that they were each worthy to succeed him as 'the Sultan of Bursa' (to use Ibn Battuta's phrase). Following his victory in 1402, in an attempt to keep the Ottomans weak so he could turn his attention to other matters, Timur had burnt and pillaged the Ottoman capital Bursa, the seat of Ottoman sovereignty and central administration, then allowed two different Ottoman princes to claim authority over the city in his name. As was his intention, this led to outright civil war. The main outlines of this civil war or interregnum (*fetret devri*) will be sketched out briefly below, with a view to underestanding the place of Bursa as well as Edirne in the Ottoman struggles for the throne.

When Timur departed in spring of 1403, Bursa was in the hands of a prince named Isa, an older brother of the eventual winner Mehmed I (r. 1413–1421). However, the prince who looked most likely to succeed Bayezid I was another older brother, Emir Süleyman (d. 1411), who had taken refuge after the battle with key members of Bayezid's court and army on the European side of the straits, away from the threat of Timur and his nomadic armies. At the time, Mehmed was only fifteen, and was in a weaker position than his brothers, since he lacked authority over the more central parts of the Ottoman domains. However, he and his army were able to assert themselves in the area around the northern Anatolian town of Amasya, which Mehmed had previously governed with the help of his tutor and princely court. Finally, a fourth prince, Musa, was still a minor and had been captured in the battle of Ankara with his father. When Bayezid died in captivity, Timur left Musa with his corpse and a diploma of appointment over Bursa, in the custody of a rival ruler, the Turkish emir of Germiyan. As is clear from the epic account of Mehmed I's

[18] The following discussion of these events is based on Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 79–110, which contains a detailed description of the sources and scholarly literature.

[19] See Kastritsis, 'The historical epic *Ahvāl-i Sultān Mehemmed*'. A full translation is available in Kastritsis, *An Early Ottoman History*, 97–151.

exploits written in his court, as well as a diplomatic document, Mehmed was able to make an alliance with the ruler of Germiyan, through which he gained possession of his father's corpse and the young prince Musa. In this way, he was able to challenge Isa's control of Bursa. Following a battle with his brother outside the city, Mehmed was able to drive out his brother and enter Bursa, where he held elaborate funeral ceremonies for his father, followed by enthronement ceremonies for himself. However, Mehmed's success prompted the intervention of Süleyman, who took control of Bursa and used it to cement his own claims. Although Mehmed had already buried Bayezid, his tomb was still unfinished, so Süleyman was able to complete it and take credit on the inscription.

From the above, it is clear how important Bursa still was for Ottoman legitimacy following the defeat by Timur in 1402. Eager to assert their claims to the succession, three sons of the defeated Bayezid I fought each other for what was left of his political legacy: an incomplete attempt at empire centred around Bursa, still perceived as the Ottoman capital. However, despite the continued importance of Bursa throughout the interregnum, during this time Edirne (Adrianople) began to be treated for the first time as an alternative capital by princes whose power did not extend to the Anatolian side of the straits. In 1402, Edirne, which like Bursa had an important Roman-Byzantine past and had long functioned as the main Ottoman centre on the European side of the straits, became the seat of the Ottoman prince Süleyman. It is clear that his intention was always to expand his power to Anatolia and rule from Bursa, and it was not long before he was able to achieve this aim. The timing of Süleyman's capture of Bursa is unclear, but should probably be dated to late 1403, or possibly a year later.[20] Süleyman's inscription on Bayezid's mausoleum is dated early 809 in the Islamic calendar (late 1406), but this may well refer to the final stages of the building's construction.[21] In any case, various sources suggest that after occupying Bursa, Ankara and other Anatolian cities, Süleyman remained mostly in Anatolia until 1410, when he was forced to return to Europe to face his brother Musa, who had earlier invaded his territory from the north. Musa's bid for power was the result of an alliance between Mehmed, in whose custody Musa had remained until that time, and a number of neighbouring powers threatened by Süleyman. It had the desired result, since Mehmed was able to take advantage of Süleyman's departure and recapture Bursa. As for Süleyman, having lost control of Ottoman Anatolia, he was once again forced to make Edirne his capital. After a series of confrontations with Musa, which ended when Musa surrounded Edirne and most of Süleyman's court and army deserted to him, Süleyman was forced to flee the city and was killed in early 1411.[22] Thus Musa became the ruler of Ottoman Rumelia and its capital until 1413, when Mehmed was finally able to overthrow and kill him, becoming sole Ottoman ruler until his death in 1421.

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[20] Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 112–113.
[21] Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 99–100.
[22] Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 153–158.

It is important to note that despite Edirne's prominent role in the careers of Süleyman and Musa, after Mehmed was able to eliminate the threat posed by their rival courts, he probably continued to treat Bursa as his main capital. Written sources suggest that Bursa was burned no fewer than three times during the period 1402–1413: first by Timur in 1402; then by Isa in retaliation against Mehmed after he lost Bursa, probably in 1403; and finally, by the neighbouring principality of Karaman, a major enemy of the Ottomans which took advantage of the conflict in Rumelia between Mehmed and Musa to attack it in 1413. According to the Byzantine chronicle of Doukas, the Karamanids even went so far as to exhume and burn the corpse of Bayezid I, which as we have seen played such an important role in the dynastic claims of both Mehmed I and his older brother Süleyman.[23] All this leaves no doubt that in 1413 Bursa was still perceived as the Ottoman ancestral capital, where members of the dynasty were to be buried. Further evidence is provided by the fact that when Musa was killed by Mehmed in Rumelia, ending the interregnum, his corpse was sent for burial across the straits to Bursa, ending Karaman's attack on the town. Like Mehmed I, whose 'green' (Yeşil) funerary socio-religious complex is among the most famous monuments in Bursa today, Murad II, under whose rule Edirne definitively became the main Ottoman capital, nonetheless chose to be buried with his ancestors in Bursa in a foundation he also constructed there, a practice that continued for lesser members of the Ottoman dynasty after Mehmed II and his successors chose instead to be buried in Constantinople. His complex, the Muradiye, is still visited today for the large number of Ottoman tombs it contains.

When did Edirne become the main Ottoman capital?

We have seen that although Bursa was still thought of as the main Ottoman capital during the interregnum of 1402–1413 and subsequent reign of Mehmed I (r. 1413–1421), this was also the time when Edirne had first emerged as an alternative capital, at least for princes without access to Bursa. Sometime during the long reign of Murad II (1421–1444, 1446–1451), Edirne finally surpassed Bursa, so that on the eve of the 1453 conquest of Constantinople it was considered the Ottoman capital.[24] However, is is difficult to determine at exactly what point the transition took place. For the first two years of Mehmed II's second reign (1451–1481), as well as his previous brief reign as an adolescent (1444–1446), there is no doubt that the capital was Edirne. Morover, even after 1453, the transition to Istanbul was not immediate and Edirne would continue to be used as a second capital for centuries to come.[25] In addition to the two palaces he built in Istanbul, Mehmed also completed the Edirne palace begun by his father Murad II around 1450, which like the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul would be expanded in the sixteenth century and added to until the end of the seventeenth.[26] All this leaves

[23] Doukas, *Decline and Fall*, 115 (chapter 21.1).
[24] Singer, 'Enter, riding on an elephant', is largely an attempt to answer the question of when Edirne became the Ottoman capital. On this question, its conclusions are broadly in agreement with my own.
[25] Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 16–18.
[26] Kontolaimos, 'A landscape for the Sultan', 21; Özer, *Ottoman Imperial Palace*, 7–12, 48–51.

no doubt that on the eve of 1453, Edirne had become the main Ottoman capital. But the nature of a capital city for the Ottoman state of the time is by no means clear, any more than the precise moment at which Bursa ceded its place to Edirne.

We have seen that a key moment in this process was the Battle of Ankara (1402) and the ensuing period of civil wars, which had special significance for both Bursa and Edirne. It was at this time that it first became apparent that Bursa was unsuitable to be the Ottoman capital, due to its vulnerability to attack by other Muslim rulers. In this sense, Edirne came for a time to resemble a safe haven, since Timur and other Muslim enemies never crossed the straits to Europe. However, this situation would not last, because the Ottomans also had Christian enemies in Europe. That is why the first action of Emir Süleyman and his officials after crossing the straits in 1402 had been to negotiate a peace treaty with Byzantium, Venice and other local Christian powers. The vulnerability of Edirne to attack from the north would become fully apparent in the 1440s, when Hungary would lead military campaigns into the Balkans and even threaten Edirne itself (see below). However, earlier in the century the threat must have appeared more remote, especially compared with the ever present danger posed by Karaman and other Muslim enemies in Anatolia.

Be that as it may, notwithstanding the continuing importance of Bursa in the early fifteenth century, at that time Edirne began to function as an alternative Ottoman capital in its own right. But there was an essential tension to be overcome before Edirne, known as 'the abode of the gazi raiders' (*dār al-ġuzāt*), could replace Bursa as 'the abode of sovereignty' (*dār al-mülk*, *i.e.* the main administrative capital).[27] This tension was inherent in the very nature of the Ottoman state and its expansion until that time, in which the newly conquered territories in Rumelia had played a key role. It was only by making peace with the Ottomans' Christian enemies there in 1403 that Süleyman had been able to then cross the straits to Anatolia and take control of Bursa. But as we have seen, his power was ultimately undermined by his brother Musa, who was able to invade Rumelia from the north. This was accomplished with the support of several Muslim and Christian powers threatened by Süleyman's success, but crucially also of the gazi raiders of Rumelia and other military elements there, for whose livelihood the resumption of warfare against Christians was essential. In order for Edirne to become the main capital of a centralised Ottoman state and its court, it was first necessary to overcome the opposition of such local elements to the growth of courtly authority in their home region. This growth entailed all the trappings of the central state and empire-building: a palace with a treasury and central taxing bureaucracy; control over marcher lords and other local power brokers; and an elite standing army loyal to the ruler, among other things. As demonstrated by well-known

[27] The term *dār al-mülk* is used for Bursa in the endowment deeds of both Bayezid I and Mehmed I for their complexes there. I would like to thank Veronika Poier for this observation. As for Edirne's place as 'abode of the gazi raiders' (*dār al-ġuzāt*), the epic-hagiography *Saltuḳnāme* compiled in the late fifteenth century uses this term, as well as providing a sense of how Edirne was perceived by the raiders of Rumelia at the time. For an English translation of a relevant passage, see Karamustafa, 'Sarı Saltık', 140–142. See also Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 148–149.

passages from a body of critical texts known as ‘the Anonymous Chronicles’ (*Chronicles of the House of Osman*), this was far from a smooth process, and one that took over a century to complete.[28]

Such resistance notwithstanding, during the long and eventful reign of Murad II (r. 1421–1444, 1446–1451), slowly but surely Edirne came to replace Bursa as the main Ottoman capital. This is apparent from contemporary historical narratives, which discuss Murad’s investment in the city and its surroundings. The following is a passage that forms part of the comprehensive Ottoman history known as Oxford Anonymous, not to be confused with the previously mentioned Anonymous Chronicles:

> The pious foundations of the Sultan of Islam and of the Muslims, Sultan Murad, know no bounds. One of the many is the bridge over the Ergene river, in what had previously been a forest. In the winter, the place would become muddy and the Muslims would be unable to pass. It would become a lair for brigands, and much evil would take place. So Sultan Murad took great pains to clear the forest and build a large bridge there, founding towns on either side as well as a hospice [*ʿimāret*]. He went there in person to cook the hospice’s stew and distribute it to the poor, granting many other favours as well. Moreover, in Edirne he built a large Friday mosque and two madrasas, one for the study of the hadith. There he also built a hospice [*ʿimāret*] and a lodge for dervishes of the Mevlevi order. He assigned *waqf* property [charitable endowments] to these, so that every day his bounty reaches many poor people. Furthermore, in Bursa he built a hospice [*ʿimāret*], and next to that a madrasa and a mausoleum intended as his own resting place. His pious foundations are without end.[29]

From this description, it is clear that Murad II invested in both cities, but that the nature of his investment was different in each one. In the case of Edirne, his aim was to build essential infrastructure for further growth, much as Orhan, Murad I and Bayezid I had done for Bursa. He also aimed to improve communications in a previously underdeveloped region, as one might expect since Edirne was in the process of becoming the main Ottoman capital. The Uzunköprü bridge was constructed in the years 1426–1443, exactly the period when the transformation of Edirne seems to have taken place. The fact that Murad built two madrasas in Edirne and only one in Bursa also points in this direction. However, that he chose Bursa to build the complex that included his own tomb would suggest that the city still retained its significance as ancestral capital and resting place of the Ottoman dynasty.

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[28] For these passages see Giese, *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken*, 21–33. Translations of some of them into English may be found in Lewis, *Islam*, 135–141, 226–227, though the translations are not entirely accurate.

[29] Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Marsh 313, ff 120r-120v. Tr. Kastritsis, *An Early Ottoman History*, 170: ‘Sulṭānü ‘l-İslām ve ‘l-Müslimīn Sulṭān Murād’uñ ḫayrātı bī-ḥaddür. Cümlesinden biri Ergine köprüsi’dür, ki evvelde bir orman olup, ḳışın çamur olup Müslümānlar geçmeyüp, ḥarāmī ṭurağı olup ziyāde fesād olurdı. Sulṭān Murād ormanı zaḥmet ile giderüp, bir büyük köpri yapdı, ve iki ṭarafına şehirler yapup bir ʿimāret yapdı. Gendü üzerine varup, aşın bişirüp fuḳarāya ülüşdürdi, ve nice inʿāmlar itdi. Andan Edrene’de bir ulu cāmiʿ ve iki medrese—biri dārü’l-ḥadīs̱—ve bir ʿimāret ve bir Mevlev<ī>ḫāne yapup, evḳāf taʿyīn itdi, her gün nice faḳīre niʿmeti yetişür. Brusa’da daḫı bir ʿimāret ve anuñ yanında bir medrese yapdurup, ve gendü āsūde olmaġ içün bir türbe yapdurdı. Anuñ ḫayrātı bī-nihāyedür’.

Needless to say, Friday mosques were an essential part of urban growth in both Bursa and Edirne. In Bursa, this need was fulfilled by the Friday mosques mentioned earlier, especially Bayezid I's large congregational mosque (Ulu Cami). In Edirne, no fewer than three of Bayezid's sons played a role in constructing the town's first large congregational mosque, which would later come to be known as the Old Mosque (Eski Cami). The building's construction closely follows the development of the city during this time, as noted twice in the anonymous *Chronicles of the House of Osman*:

> Emir Süleyman ruled for seven years. Then Musa Çelebi became ruler. He stayed in Edirne, where he laid the foundations of the Old Mosque [Eski Cami]. He had the building constructed to the point where it came above the ground.
> [...]
> After [suppressing the Şeyh Bedreddin revolt in 1416], Sultan Mehmed [I] went and stayed in Bursa. And in Edirne, Emir Süleyman had begun [work on] the Old Mosque [Eski Cami]. Then Musa Çelebi had raised it above the ground. So in the end, it fell to Sultan Mehmed's lot to complete it. He also built a hospice [*ʿimāret*] in Bursa. He was the first to begin the palace in Edirne. He built it, and after that the padishahs resided there. The prominent lords [*beg*] resided in Bursa. At that time, there were no houses in Edirne outside the fortifications. After that, everything outside them also became part of the city. In Edirne, Sultan Mehmed attained the command of God [*i.e.* he died]. May God's mercy be upon him.[30]

From the above, it is clear that upon Mehmed I's death in 1421, in addition to a large Friday mosque, Edirne already had a functioning palace, which was used and possibly expanded by Mehmed I.[31] Although the above text creates the impression that the entire palace was first constructed by Mehmed, in fact it must already have existed by the late fourteenth century. Already under Murad I (r. 1262–1289), Edirne had become the European capital of the Ottoman dynasty, alongside Dimetoka which had long functioned as a royal residence and stronghold for the treasury.[32] This 'old' Edirne palace had probably developed gradually from military installations, since by

[30] Giese, *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken*, 49, 55, my translation: 'Emīr Süleymān yedi yıl beglik itdi. Andan ṣoñra Mūsā Çelebi beg oldı. Edrene'de ḳarār itdi. Eski Cāmiʿi bünyād bıraḳdı, tā yir yüzine çıḳınca bināsı yapdurdı ... Andan ṣoñra Sulṭān Meḥemmed varup Burṣa'da ḳarār itdi. Ve Edrene'de Eski Cāmiʿi Emīr Süleymān başladı, Mūsā Çelebi yirden yuḳaru ḳaldurdı, āḫırı Sulṭān Meḥemmed'e naṣīb oldı, ol tamām itdürdi. Andan Burṣa'da daḫı bir ʿimāret yapdurdı. Evvel Edrene'de ol sarāy başladı, düzdürdi, andan ṣoñra pādişāhlar Edrene'de durur oldılar. İlerü gelen begler Bursa'da ṭururlardı. Ol vaḳit Edrene'nüñ ḥiṣārından ṭaşrasında evler yoġdı. Andan ṣoñra ṭaşrası daḫı hep şehir oldı. Andan ṣoñra Sulṭān Meḥemmed Edrene'de Allāh emrine vāṣıl oldı, Raḥmetullāhi ʿaleyh'.

[31] Amy Singer has suggested that there may have been no palace in Edirne under Mehmed I, based on the fact that it does not appear in the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade; she points out that Murphey has dismissed the mention of a palace under Murad I as a 'phantom appearance' in the sources (Singer, 'Enter, riding on an elephant', 96; Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 50). However, despite its undeniable importance, Aşıkpaşazade's work is but one available account. Also, Murphey does not so much dismiss the existence of the earlier palace as point out that not enough is known about it, and that nothing existed on the scale of the later Edirne palace begun around 1450.

[32] On the 'old' Edirne palace, its location in the town, and the role of Dimetoka as royal residence, see Kontolaimos, 'A landscape for the Sultan', 20; Zachariadou, 'The sultanic residence and the capital'; Bessi, 'The topographic reconstruction of Ottoman Dimetoka', 47.

this time the town was also the main centre for training the Janissaries. Its location was apparently outside the city walls to the north-east, where Sinan's famous Selimiye mosque may still be seen today. It still existed in the second half of the seventeenth century, when it was described by Evliya Çelebi, but since nothing remains today its precise character and extent are unclear. In at least some respects, however, it must have served as a model for the more extensive 'new' Edirne palace begun by Murad II, about which much more is known.[33] Murad II also built another Friday mosque in the centre of the city, so that the old one came to be known as the Old Mosque (Eski Cami) and the new one as the New Mosque (Yeni Cami). Murad II's mosque is known today as Üç Şerefeli ('three balconied') because of the inclusion of a minaret with three balconies. In addition to the minaret, which is one of four probably reflecting Timurid inspiration, the plan shows the growing influence of Byzantine architecture, in that it includes a large dome and half dome. This has been seen as a stage in the formation of classical Ottoman architecture, and shows the influence of Byzantine architecture even before the conquest of Constantinople and its famous cathedral of Hagia Sophia.[34]

For our purposes, Murad II's choice to construct in Edirne a new palace as well as a second Friday mosque with two attached madrasas, one for studying the hadith as would later be the case later with the Süleymaniye in Istanbul, all point to a conscious decision to make Edirne the primary Ottoman capital. Of course, Murad's patronage would also produce the Muradiye complex in Bursa, renowned today as the resting place not only of Murad himself but of also of other members of the Ottoman dynasty. The main building's construction on a 'T-type' plan suggests that with this complex, Murad intended to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors who had also built such structures in Bursa. It is the last royal complex built on such a plan, following Murad's earlier construction in Edirne of a convent mosque on the same 'T-type' plan, originally intended as a Mevlevi lodge but later converted to a Friday mosque.[35] Such foundations remained popular in Rumelia even after 1453, albeit with non-royal patrons, implying that they had become associated with an earlier Ottoman culture still revered by Rumelian Muslims. In any case, it is clear that by the end of Murad's reign we see the transition of Bursa from Ottoman capital to ancestral city of the dynasty, where the tombs of its earlier members were located and it was appropriate for later princes also to be buried. Further evidence that by this time Edirne had become the main Ottoman capital is provided by the complex events surrounding Murad's decision to abdicate in favour of his son Mehmed II. It was 1444, and by this time the importance of Europe for the survival and advancement

[33] On the 'new' Edirne palace and its structures, especially the famous Cihannüma Kasrı ('world-surveying tower') which shows Byzantine and Latin influence, see Özer, *Ottoman Imperial Palace*; Kontolaimos, 'A landscape for the Sultan'; Arel, 'Cihannüma Kasrı'.

[34] On the Üç Şerefeli and Murad II's other monuments in the context of Ottoman architectural history, see Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 79. See also Tanman, 'Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi'nin'.

[35] This is known today as the Muradiye of Edirne. See Blessing, 'The blue-and-white tiles of the Muradiye in Edirne'.

of the Ottoman state had grown, not just because the territories newly conquered for Islam were beyond the claims and military reach of other Muslim dynasties, but also because the threat posed by Christendom had increased and had shifted to the forefront of Ottoman concerns. The reasons for Murad II's abdication in favour of Mehmed are still not entirely clear; however, he was probably motivated at least in part by concerns over the succession. At the time, there was still an Ottoman pretender living in Byzantine Constantinople, and succession had been a problem of the Ottoman state for more than forty years.[36]

Whatever his motivation, when Murad chose to retire in 1444, he placed his son Mehmed on the throne in Edirne and retired to the Anatolian city of Manisa, where Mehmed had previously been governor. According to the history of Aşıkpaşazade:

> Then Sultan Murad Khan Gazi came to Edirne. He said to [Çandarlı] Halil Paşa, 'I will place my son on the throne. For I have conducted many campaigns of holy raiding, and would now like to see during my own lifetime what kind of padishah my son will become.' So straight away, he ordered that they bring over from Manisa his son, namely Sultan Mehmed Gazi.[37]

The above passage comes between two others in the same history concerning Murad's ordering of the affairs of Rumelia. All of this points to the fact that by this time, Rumelia had become the main focus of Ottoman politics. To be sure, Ottoman interests in Anatolia were always threatened by Karaman and other enemies, a situation Murad presumably hoped to control from Manisa with the help of subordinates in other towns. In this connection, it is worth noting that Aşıkpaşazade also presents the ruler of Karaman as corresponding with the Hungarian king, suggesting common action against the Ottomans in Edirne.[38] Although, like all histories of the period, Aşıkpaşazade's account had its own agendas, there is little doubt that by the middle of Murad II's reign Ottoman strategic use of evolving cities to promote their claims to sovereignty had taken a new turn and Edirne had become the main theatre of action as far as the Ottoman state was concerned. But we would be misguided to propose a straightforward progression with the ascent of one city and the regress of another. The geographical context of foreign policy and internal power play expressed through cities was complex and shifting, rather than linear. Prior to his abdication, Murad had reached an accommodation with Serbia and Hungary, which he apparently considered adequate for securing his son Mehmed's position in Edirne. Murad was proven wrong almost immediately, when the Hungarians crossed the Danube and attacked deep into Ottoman territory, so that the threat was felt even as far south as Edirne. As a result, Murad was forced to leave his retirement in Manisa and lead the Ottoman armies at

[36] On these complex events, the best discussion is still İnalcık, *Fatih Devri*.

[37] Aşıkpaşazade, *Âşıkpaşazâde Tarihi*, 174, my translation: 'Andan ṣoñra Sulṭān Murād Ḫān Ġāzī daḫı Edrene'ye geldi. Ḫalīl Paşa'ya eydür "Ben oğlımı taḫta geçürürin" dir. "Ben ḫayli ġazā seferlerin itdüm. İmdi benüm oğlum daḫı benüm ḥayātumda göreyüm ne ṣūretilen pādişāh olur" didi. Hemān oğlını Maʿnisa'dan getürtdi kim ol Sulṭān Meḥemmed Ġāzī'dür'.

[38] Aşıkpaşazade, *Âşıkpaşazâde Tarihi*, 174.

Varna. The Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439) had resulted in unified Christian action. An anonymous Ottoman account of the events surrounding Varna makes it clear that knowledge of this unified Christian front was circulating in Ottoman society, which makes Murad's choice to abdicate his throne and retire to the quiet western Anatolian town of Manisa all the more surprising.[39] In fact, he returned from retirement not once but twice: first in 1444 to face the Hungarian threat, then again in 1446, when events and court politics suggested that the young Mehmed was not yet suitable for the throne.

From our perspective, what is again significant about these events is the shift of Ottoman concerns to Edirne, where trenches were dug in 1444 to resist a possible Hungarian attack.[40] As the anonymous account makes clear, the threat was such that the viziers and other magnates in Edirne had moved their property to the better fortified Dimetoka (Didymoteichon). According to this narrative, they justified their action to Edirne's residents by saying that they were men of affairs, so their situation was different from that of the town's residents; they may be required to carry out their duties outside Edirne, in which case they would require a treasury. However, the anonymous author is sceptical of their motives and adds that in fact they just wished to protect their property.[41] The account of the Burgundian Bertradon de la Broquière, who travelled through the region in 1433, also suggests that around this time the stronghold of Dimetoka was the location of the Ottoman treasury.[42] In fact, this had long been the case, as shown by the research of Elizabeth Zachariadou and Ourania Bessi.[43] In any case, it is clear from both the Ottoman account and that of Bertrandon that by the 1430s and 1440s, Edirne had come to occupy the place previously held by Bursa as the location of the Ottoman central administration, and an obvious target for enemy invaders. A further indication of Edirne's prominent status at the end of Murad II's reign is Mehmed II's marriage to a princess from the eastern Anatolian Turcoman principality of Dulkadır. This diplomatic union, which took place in 1449 after Murad's final return to the throne, followed a precedent established by Mehmed I (d. 1421), who had also married a princess from Dulkadır.[44]

We have seen that toward the end of his reign, Murad II had begun constructing the new Edirne palace, which survives in ruined form even today. It was still the

[39] Anonymous, *The Holy Raids of Sultan Murad Son of Sultan Mehmed Khan*, see Imber, *Crusade of Varna*, 42–44, 47–51.

[40] For a detailed account of these events, including a translation of the source in question, see Imber, *Crusade of Varna*, 5–30 (esp. 26–27).

[41] Imber, *Crusade of Varna*, 79–80.

[42] Broquière, *Le voyage d'Outremer*, 172–173, 180, 186–188.

[43] Zachariadou, 'The sultanic residence and the capital'; Bessi, 'The topographic reconstruction of Ottoman Dimetoka', 47.

[44] Thanks to a set of Byzantine paintings commemorating the event, we are able to picture Mehmed II's nomadic bride riding into Edirne on an elephant. For a detailed discussion of the wedding and Byzantine image, see Singer, 'Enter, riding on an elephant', 100–106. For Mehmed I's earlier marriage alliance with Dulkadir, see Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 107, 188; Kastritsis, *An Early Ottoman History*, 125–126, 146.

main Ottoman palace until Mehmed II constructed others in his new capital, and continued to be used later as an alternative to the Topkapi palace in Istanbul, for which it had served as a model.[45] Thanks to photographs from the nineteenth century, when it was still standing, as well as more recent excavations, it is possible to know a fair amount about its layout and the function of its main buildings. However, we have seen that there was already an older palace in Edirne. This was the palace still in use during the first half of the fifteenth century, and would come to be known after the construction of the new palace (Sarāy-i Cedīd) as 'the old palace' (Sarāy-ı ʿAtīḳ). It is this palace that was visited by Bertrandon de la Broquière in 1433, and that also appears in the various narratives describing the struggles for Edirne during the civil wars of 1402–1413. In the years preceding the final confrontation between Emir Süleyman and Musa, which ended with Süleyman's death in early 1411, Musa had established his control in Ottoman Rumelia and fortified the palace, but was later ousted by Süleyman who took up residence there once again. Eventually, Musa was able to drive his brother out of Edirne by winning over his military commanders and officials. But a few years later, Musa himself was forced to flee when his older brother Mehmed took control of the surrounding region (1413). We saw that the anonymous *Chronicles of the House of Osman* present Mehmed I as the first Ottoman ruler 'to stay in Edirne', and claim that it was he who began construction of the Edirne palace. However, this source as it has come down to us was compiled later, at a time when the reigns of Mehmed's brothers Süleyman and Musa were not recognised as legitimate by Ottoman historiography. Most probably, the old palace of Edirne existed already under Murad I in the 1380s. As Colin Imber has suggested, after the sack of Bursa by Timur in 1402 it may well have surpassed any royal residence that still existed in Bursa.[46] Nevertheless, at least in some cases the function of the palace in this period of Ottoman history was probably as much military as courtly; given the importance of Edirne for Ottoman expansion into Rumelia, even before 1402 the Edirne palace may well have surpassed the one in Bursa in size, if not in significance. As discussed earlier with regard to Bursa's role in the dynastic wars of the Ottoman interregnum, even in the absence of a substantial palace a town could still be thought of as the main Ottoman capital on historical and cultural grounds.

To conclude, we have seen that in the period before the conquest of Constantinople Ottoman notions of a capital city were still fluid and very different from the situation post-1453. Already under Orhan in the mid-fourteenth century, as suggested by Ibn Battuta's visit and other evidence, Bursa was being treated as the main capital of a largely itinerant court. Bertrandon de la Broquière's account from a century later suggests that Edirne was not so different under Murad II, who like his predecessors was largely an itinerant ruler. Nonetheless, as the Ottoman state developed into an

[45] Özer, *Ottoman Imperial Palace.* Although Özer's book is a useful resource on the later, more famous Edirne palace, including some old photos and archeological data from recent work on the site, the author does not provide citations for his claims about the earlier palace.

[46] Imber, *Ottoman Empire 1300–1650*, 144.

empire over the second half of the fourteenth century, it stands to reason that Bursa's status as capital of the enriched and empowered Ottoman sultanate would also have increased, giving the city the status of capital or 'abode of sovereignty' (*dār al-mülk*, the term used in Bayezid I and Mehmed I's endowment deeds). Evidence of Bursa's enduring importance can be found in the many royal construction projects there, which continued under Murad II even as Edirne came to replace Bursa as the main Ottoman capital. Here it is also worth mentioning the funerary complex in Bursa associated with the important Sufi Emir Sultan of Bukhara, who married into the Ottoman family and is still viewed today as the patron saint of the city. Although the mosque itself probably began life as a Sufi lodge (*tekke*) in the fourteenth century, and no longer survives in its original form, it was further developed during this time to include a mosque and the holy man's tomb, who died under Murad II.[47]

When discussing Ottoman urbanism prior to the conquest of Constantinople, it is also important to bear in mind other cities that functioned at one or another time as Ottoman provincial capitals, or otherwise important centres. These included Amasya, Mehmed I's provincial capital and main power base during the Ottoman civil war of 1402–1413; nearby Tokat, whose fortifications functioned as a military base and prison for Ottoman grandees and diplomatic hostages; and other strongholds and provincial capitals in Anatolia and the Balkans, such as Ankara, Kütahya, Manisa, Sofya and Serres (Siroz), to name only a few. The types of buildings discussed above – Friday mosques and socio-religious complexes – were also constructed in some of these places during the same time, and played a key role in Ottoman urbanism during the period in question. There would also have been palaces in the various provincial capitals, such as Birgi, Manisa and Ayasoluk, which the Ottomans either took over from previous dynasties or constructed themselves. A comprehensive discussion of these is beyond the scope of this paper, which has primary concerned itself with the role of Bursa and Edirne as Ottoman capitals in the century before 1453. Although Bursa's importance continued into the fifteenth century, by the middle of Murad II's reign (*c*. 1430) Edirne was well on its way to replacing Bursa as the main Ottoman capital. The repeated sacks of Bursa during the troubled period 1402–1413, as well as the use of Edirne as capital by several Ottoman princes during the same time, were probably both factors in these developments, as was the shifting focus of Ottoman politics to Europe during Murad II's reign. As a result, on the eve of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Edirne had emerged as the main capital of an empire now bent on championing the cause of Islam against the threat of unified Christian action. Thanks to Murad II's 'New Palace' and Üç Şerefeli mosque in Edirne, as well as the other infrastructure built there in the first half of the fifteenth century, Murad's successor Mehmed the Conqueror would have ready inspiration for rebuilding Constantinople, once he had finally conquered it and decided to make it the capital of his own empire.

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47 Tanman, 'Emîr Sultan Külliyesi', 149; Algül and Azamat, 'Emîr Sultan', 147.

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